

## Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCCT-02 AID-20 CCO-00 FBO-01

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NIC-01 NSC-07 SPC-03 OC-06

OPR-02 PA-04 USSS-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01

SS-20 SY-03 SCS-03 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

DRC-01 CU-04 /143 W

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R 191230Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0350

INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY COLOMBA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY WTIRT

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

DOD WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 75652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: STUDENT-LED VIOLENCE IN BIHAR

SUMMARY: STUDENTS HAVE ENGAGED IN THREE DAYS' DEMONSTRATIONS  
AGAINST

THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR WHICH QUICKLY BECAME VIOLENT  
AND HAVE LEFT A REPORTED SEVEN DEAD THUS FAR. "ANTI-SOCIAL  
ELEMENTS" ALSO ENGAGED IN LOOTING AND ARSON IN PATNA. CROWD

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CONTROL HAS BEEN MANAGED BY POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY UNITS SO

FAR, BUT ARMY UNITS ARE STANDING BY. IN AN EFFORT TO HEAD OFF ANOTHER GUJARAT-STYLE DEBACLE IN BIHAR, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DISPATCHED BIHARI DEFENSE MINISTER RAM AND HOME MINISTER DIKSHIT TO PATNA. NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION LEADERS -- AND QUITE PROBABLY DISSIDENT CONGRESSMEN AS WELL-- MAY HOPATCO USE THE STUDENTS TO BRING DOWN CHIEF MINISTER GHAFOR AND CUT HIS PATRON, RAILWAY MINISTER L. N. MISHRA, DOWN TO SIZE.  
END SUMMARY.

1. AS GUJARAT RETURNED TO NORMAL, BUDAR BECAME THE SCENE OF RE-

NEWED VIOLENCE. LEFTIST STUDENTS, WHOSE RELATIONS WITH THE BIHAR POLICE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BITTER, TOOK OVER TWO UNIVERSITIES EARLY LAST WEEK. THEY ORGANIZED A STATEWIDE "GHERAO" (SURROUNDING AND BLOCKADE) OF DISTRICT COLLECTORATES MARCH 16 TO PRESS THEIR DEMANDS

FOR GREATER AVAILABILITY OF FOODGRAINS AT LOWER

PRICES, FOR RADICAL REFORMS IN EDUCATION, FOR MORE JOBS, AND AGAINST WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION. BIHAR EDUCATION MINISTER VIDYAKAR KAVI WAS ROUGHED UP. (ALLEGEDLY, KAVI HAD "ORDERED" A UNIVERSITY VICE-CHANCELLOR TO GIVE HIS SON PASSING MARKS; THE VICE-CHANCELLOR REFUSED AND WAS FIRED.) THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF PATNA UNIVERSITY HAS ALSO RESIGNED IN THE FACE OF STUDENT UNREST. TWO DEMONSTRATING STUDENTS WERE KILLED BY POLICE FIRING IN A DISTRICT TOWN MARCH 16.

2. PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO THESE EXCESSES, BUT ALSO TO DRAMATIZE THEIR SIMILAR DEMANDS, STUDENTS AFFILIATED TO NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTIES (THE OLD CONGRESS, THE "RIGHTIST" JANA SUHGH, AND THE POPULIST SAMYUKTA SOCIALIST PARTY) PLANNED A "GHERAO" OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY WHEN IT OPENED. CONGRESS CHIEF MINISTER GHAFOR RETURNED TO PATNA MARCH 17 AND ARGUED THAT HE HAD ALREADY CONCEDED THE "JUST DEMANDS" OF THE STUDENTS' JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE. THOUSANDS PARTICIPATED IN THE MARCH 18 "GHERAO" OF THE ASSEMBLY. THE DEMONSTRATORS BECAME VIOLENT, POLICE FIRED IN THREE AREAS, AND A REPORTED FIVE WERE KILLED. IN THE ASSEMBLY, GOVERNOR BHANDARE CUT SHORT HIS PLANNED INAUGURAL ADDRESS. WHEN REPORTS OF ARSON AND FIRING REACHED THE LEGISLATORS, THEY BROKE UP IN CONFUSION.  
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SEVERAL MINISTERS' BODYGUARDS DREW THEIR PISTOLS AND REPORTEDLY FIRED WITHIN THE HOUSE, AND UNPRECEDENTED DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA. IN PATNA CITY, HOOLIGANS ENCOURAGED BY THE ABSENCE OF POLICE WHO WERE GUARDING THE ASSEMBLY BUILDING, ENGAGED IN ARSON AND LOOTING. THEY REPORTEDLY HIT ABOUT TWENTY SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS, TRIED TO BURN THE OFFICES OF A LOCAL ENGLISH DAILY CALLED "THE INDIAN NATION", AND SUCCEEDED IN SETTING FIRE TO THE OFFICES OF ANOTHER, "SEARCHLIGHT". DAMAGE TO RAILROADS AND GOVERNMENT

OFFICES IN RURAL BIHAR WAS REPORTED. STATE POLICE, ASSISTED BY CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE AND BY BORDER SECURITY FORCE UNITS (LED BY THE NATIONAL COMMANDER, GEN. RUSTOMJI), HAD IMPOSED A CURFEW AND SOME DEGREE OF ORDER IN PATNA BY MARCH 19. (NEWS REPORTS THAT THE ARMY HAD ENTERED PATNA WERE NOT CONFIRMED BY COMPETENT SOURCES IN NEW DELHI. SOME ARMY UNITS HAVE BEEN MOVED CLOSER TO PATNA AND ONE STAGED A "FLAG MARCH" THERE ON MARCH 18, BUT ARMY OFFICERS ARE REPORTEDLY MOST RELUCTANT TO MOVE THEIR TROOPS INTO THE CENTER OF AN ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL BRAWL.)

3. IN SHARP CONTRAST TO ITS SLOW REACTION TO THE INITIAL DISTURBANCES IN GUJARAT, THE UNION GOVERNMENT MOVED QUICKLY TO SEEK POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE BIHAR DISTURBANCES. THE PRIME MINISTER APPEALED TO THE FACTION-RIDDEN BIHAR CONGRESS TO REMAIN UNITED. SHE SENT HOME MINISTER BIKSHIT, BIHARI "HARIJAN" DEFENSE MINISTER RAM, AND CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY CHADRAJIT YADAV TO PATNA TO STRENGTHEN GHAFOR'S HAND AND, HOPEFULLY, CALM THE STUDENTS. THE STUDENTS HAVE WARNED POLITICIANS NOT TO MEDDLE IN THEIR AFFAIRS, BUT NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS, WHO BOYCOTTED BHANDARE'S ADDRESS, HAVE CLEAR TIES WITH SOME STUDENT GROUPS. THE JANA SANGH "MILITIA" (RSS) AND VIOLENCE-PRONE ANAND MARG FOLLOWERS ARE REPORTEDLY ACTIVE. THE PRO-COMMUNIST "PATRIOT" OF NEW DELHI, HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF THESE TWO EXTREME RIGHT-WING GROUPS, HAS ALREADY EDITORIALIZED ABOUT THE "ASSUMED" ROLE OF "SECRET FOREIGN AGANCIES" IN BIHAR. "PARTIOT" ON MARCH 19 REPORTED THAT CONGEN CALCUTTA OFFICIAL PETER BURLEIGH HAD VISITED BIHAR BEFORE THE PRESENT VIOLENCE, A "SINISTER COINCIDENCE". (IT OMITTED POL COUNSELOR'S PRESENCE ON SAME TRIP.)

4. COMMENT: PARTICULARLY AFTER THE FALL OF THE GUJARAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOOD SHORTAGE, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS, DEATHS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 MAR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:** ANOMALY  
**Review Date:** 24 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <24 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <27 JUN 2002 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** STUDENT-LED VIOLENCE IN BIHAR SUMMARY: STUDENTS HAVE ENGAGED IN THREE DAYS' DEMONSTRATIONS  
**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, IN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005